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Comment

RMR will again be represented in the O. Henry Memorial Award volume of short stories edited by Herschell Brickell. This year's selection will be Katherine Shattuck's story "Subway System," which appeared in the Winter number. Miss Shattuck is a native of Denver, and "Subway System" was her first appearance in RMR, though she has published stories in **American Prefaces** and **Accent.** She is a former member of the Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa and last year taught school in Pennsylvania.

This is the second straight year that a wirter from the Rocky Mountain area has been represented in the O. Henry collection with a reprint from the **Rocky Mountain Review.** It will be remembered that Walter Van Tilburg Clark's "A Buck in the Hills" appeared in the 1944 volume. Mr. Clark's second novel (successor to the well-known **The Ox-Bow Incident**) has just been published by Random House and is reviewed in this issue of RMR. It is entitled **The City of Trembling Leaves,** and its setting is Reno, Nevada.

RMR has, during the past year, published "first stories" by the following authors from the Rocky Mountains: Christie Lund Coles of Salt Lake City, Jarvis Thurston of Ogden, and, in this issue, Blanche Cannon of Salt Lake City. Much favorable comment has been received for Mr. Thurston's "The One and Only Appearance of Jeez Christ on Sun Mountain." It is an interesting fact that all three stories appearing in this issue are by authors who have never before published, and who can, therefore, be considered "discoveries" of RMR. Addie Scott is a Negro girl whose home is in Louisiana. Tess Carlos is from Atlanta, Georgia, at present living in Wisconsin. Both are former members of the Iowa Writers Workshop.

(Continued on Page 206)

Night Blooming Cereus

By ADDIE SCOTT

THE moonlight split the Mississippi into shreds and walked into the door of the shabby cabin leaning against the night.

"The river sure pretty tonight," Claude Holmes told his mama, "The river it's running like ribbons all over the night. But the day, Lord the river." Claude struck a C note on his guitar and propped his long leg on the porch steps.

Claude's mama came out the door with a black shawl over her head and walked into the night. Claude just sat there and played note by note, the tune he always played to warm up on. Just Claude there in the night, and the irregular turning of locks, and dropping bolts behind barns, and pens and coops. "Mama locking up everything right tight," Claude said. "Fasten em up tight. Fasten em up right." Claude grinned and struck another note.

Note after note in the night, down the long lonesome paths and miles and miles of farmhouses, and notes of music, and mama locking doors, and dropping bolts, pigs getting fat for slaughter, and Claude grinning into the big open night.

Down the paths of dandelions, down the paths of yellow sun flowers, down paths of morning glories, down the paths, out of the night, people came walking, some skipping, some walking slowly.

That's the way it was when Claude got on his guitar, they came from everywhere. The people liked Claude's playing, and about time he was good and warmed up the people were standing all around.

"Good evening, Sister Holmes. How you do, Claude." They all came and mama went to the cabin and walked out with her cob pipe. Mama would never let Claude get her another one. Ma had smoked the same pipe for years now, Claude thought, but Ma said the longer she smoked the old pipe the sweeter it was.

Claude had an audience now all sitting around patting feet and laughing and telling jokes, and joining Claude in his songs:

"If you don't love me, baby,
  Hurry tell me so;
If you don't love me baby,
  Hurry tell me so;
  Leavin on that special tonight,
Ain't coming back
  No more.

Then Claude would break out with one of his specialties—like Mississippi Delta Boogie, and Juanite with her slender hips would pivot around on one foot and snap back her hips into a step, step—and all the people said, "Who----ee-eeeeeee!"

Sammy Jackson stood aside a while and patted his foot, then the music got him, Sammy was snapping hip after hip first to the front, then to the side, then in a rotation. "Yeah, Owwww-w-ooo-eee," the people screamed,

Sammy and Juanita really went to town the people said, and Claude just threw his head back and played right on never looking at no body.

"Juanite, do that Charleston, for us," Mama Holmes said.

"That's a old one, Sister Holmes, can't you think of a new one? Mama Holmes shook her head and said, naw she couldn't think of any one newer than that. Mama Holmes said in her day they 'cake-walked.' She was really good at that some years back, but when the new fangle Charleston came out, she tried to brush up on her steps but she was too old for that sort of thing now, she said to the people.

"Oh you ain't gonna let us down. You ain't too old. Sammy pulled her down the steps, "Come on Sister Holmes and let's show them how to really do it."

"Naw, now Sammy, you children go on. I can't get around like you children; you children go on, I done forgot----------."

The music was hot and Claude was working up a sweat keeping up the pace. Mama Holmes picked up her long checked apron and pointed her high topped shoes into a prissy little dance. The music went faster and faster, and Sammy and Ma Holmes whirled around and around.

It was amazing the people said. At her age too, and whirling around like that. I bet she was a number in her day, Maceo screamed. Ma didn't pay it any attention. She just closed her eyes and grinned and grinned and whirled and whirled. She and Sammy whirling, whirling.

The people were clapping now, the people were shouting, the people said it was amazing at her age! The people said wonders do happen.

Juanite clapped her hands and rared back with all her worth, "Go on Sister Holmes," Juanite sat on the edge of the porch and braced herself against a flower pot. The soft damp petal touched her on the back of her neck. "Go on Sister Holmes, you doing all right for yourself." The soft petal touched the back of her neck. Go on Sister Holmes, you are fine, you really going to town tonight." The soft petal touched her on the back of her neck.

Juanite looked around to see what it was touching her. Then the thought flashed through her mind it was a snake. Juanite shrieked out, "Ow -w-w, what is that!" The people looked around to see what it was in the night bothering Juanite. Sammy jumped over to hit whatever it was, but he didn't find a thing.

The dancing started again. Juanite yelled out, "Goodness, What's that!" Sammy said he was good and sick of her hollering and nothing there, told her to shut up her mouth. Juanite said she couldn't hush when

whatever it was that touched her, touched her.

"You scared of a little flower, Juanite, Claude said turning around. "What's that she scared of Claude?"

"Nothing. This little plant back here."

"Oh, that? My little Night blooming cereus."

"Night blooming cereus? What's that the people said.

"That's the baby Jesus in the cradle. That's the star of Bethlehem. That's the baby Jesus, that little flower.

"Well sir," the people cried.

"The baby Jesus, the star of Bethlehem. He blooms tonight, he dies tonight."

"But ain't that funny. Dies tonight. Blooms tonight, dies tonight," Sammy said.

"Sure mighty funny," Alex told the people. "One night!"

"Oh but it sure pretty, Sister Holmes. It sure pretty. The little baby Jesus blooming in the cradle."

"But it die so soon. It die so soon," Ralph replied.

"Lil babe, Jesus—born tonight—born—to—night—dies—to—night---," Claude plucked slowly on his guitar.

"Goin die tonight," the people said.

"Ain't it a shame," Juanite shook her head.

"Ain't it a shame," the people said.

Grandma pulled her black shawl around her shoulders, and told the people. Woo, woo, woo. The twelve-twenty special was coming around the hills. Woo, woo, it came.

"There it comes," the people said.

"Twelve-twenty Special—coming—a—round—the—tr—acks, train,—co--ming- round— the tr—acks, time to go— to —sl—ee-ep—sleep. Claude plucked on his guitar. Then Claude broke out with her "Black Train Special tune."

The black train, it come,
After the Sun gone down;
The black train it come,
After the sun gone down;
When that whistle blows, baby,
I won't be long around.

The black train it comes,
Like a little night blooming flower,
The black train it comes,
Like a little night blooming flower,
Hear that whistle, baby,
And it don't know no hour,
And it don't know no hour.

"Well, good night, Sister Holmes, and good-bye, Claude. Going home

now," and the people walked down the paths, going home, frogs—and the lightning bugs—the people walked down the path, going home.

Grandma walked in the black night through the dark door of her cabin with the black shawl over her shoulders. Claude picked up his guitar from his knees, and wiped his lips sore from singing, and all left the little night blooming cereus smelling sweet on the porch of the cabin. Claude closed the door, and pulled off his shirt. The train whistled in the distance and grandma pulled off her black shawl and climbed in her white bed. It was like her younger days, grandma Holmes said to herself.

Yeah, Sister Holmes sure did strut her stuff last night. Talking about getting old, talking about no life left to dance. You just ask Sister Holmes. It was a good time, Sister Holmes grinned and smiled at her self sheepishly.

It was a good time last night. Sister Holmes turned over on her right shoulder and went to sleep. Claude snored loud that night, and grandma Holmes snored soft, and the snores from two tired people hummed in the in the cabin and outside—outside lightening bugs jumped in and out like little lights in the night blooming cereus.

About morning the rooster crowed loud as a train whistle and screamed with his wings stretched wide on the locked barns and fluttering over the bolted pens of pigs, and waking up everybody and everything.

Claude got up from his cool palette on the floor and snatched his pants with a bong from the big guitar that hung on a nail on the wall.

"Wake up grandma, it's morning now. I'm going into the fields. Seen my green straw hat grandma? Give me the loud green hat, grandma with the red band. It's a bright pretty morning and I want to dress up like the brand new day. Gonna meet that sun in live new colors, grandma. Grandma?"

Claude walked into her room, "Tired still, grandma?" Claude shook her. Grandma did not move. Claude drew his face near hers to feel the hot breath of air on his nose, but the cool morning was still, and grandma was still, and the white sheets did not move.

Examination of Modern Authors

1: Thomas Mann: The Artist as Bourgeois

by CHARLES NEIDER

THOMAS Mann's position in the artistic tradition is fairly clear. It is not surprising to find him preoccupied with himself as artist as isolated (as did Goethe, Tolstoy, Rolland, Joyce, Proust, Kafka, Lawrence and Thomas Wolfe, among others), for because of his burgher forbears and his own naturally conservative temperament Mann tends to regard the artistic impulse in himself and in creative men generally as something suspect and verging on the criminal. This suspicion is directly related to the romantic notion that art is the product of disease. His preoccupation has been quite frank in a literay sense; as a matter of fact, it may be considered as the inspiration for his entire output, both fictional and didactic; rarely has a writer's work had a more thoroughly autobiographical foundation. It has also led him to a personal variation of the artist myth: it has brought him to a consideration of himself (and the artist in general) as a middle man between the burgher and the bohemian, as the mediator between nature and spirit and as the referee between tradition and revolt. Put another way: it has led him to attempt to bring the artist back into the fold of good society, to make him somewhat more "respectable" after his nineteenth century escapades. Phrased still differently, he has attempted (whether consciously or not is beside the point) to bridge the chasm between the artist's nineteenth century isolation and his expected respectability in the coming world state. In the sense that he is a middle man he is a bourgeoise. But he is also a bourgeois in relation to his family life and to other aspects of his outward existence. This necessity to compromise is probably partly the cause of much of what he calls the "artist's guilt;" another cause is his highly developed egotism, that which is generally referred to in such contexts as the artist's extreme love of self. Because of his professed role of mediator and because of his patrician bearing, Mann has been found unpalatable in certain company and has been compared unfavorably (particularly by Europeans) with his brother, Heinrich. Without attempting to pass judgment at the moment, it may be indicated that a contrast of the brothers is quite illuminating. Heinrich, in his mercurial temperament, carries forward the tradition of the nineteenth century artist as inspired and admirably bohemian. Intellectually, however, he is an eighteenth-century product. On the other hand Thomas is eighteenth century in behavior (much like Goethe) and nineteenth century intelluctually

with his love of myth, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Wagner.

We shall soon see how Mann developed his role of artist as bourgeois by taking up a stand midway between the burgher and the bohemian. We shall also distinguish three periods of his development. For the first period of his creative activity (which I arbitrarily call the prewar or *pre-Magic -Mountain* period) Mann's role was more temperamental and literary than practical. In his second period (the *Magic Mountain* period, including *The Reflections of a Non-Political Man*, which preceded the novel) Mann made his metaphysical peace with his accepted role. In his third and final period metaphysical peace with his accepted role. In his third and final period (the Joseph period) he carried out the political implications of his role. Thus his work and life constitute the development of the isolated artist-type into the artist as one of and provider for the people.

It should be noted that Mann's use of the categories of artist and bourgeois display his tendency to involve himself in metaphysical absolutes which are more characteristic of the comparatively stable nineteenth century than of the more fluid and chaotic twentieth. His use of the term artist seems almost Platonic; and one wonders whether it is, after all, justified. Tradition seems to support him; yet one must distinguish between tradition and truth. The simplest definition of "artist" is perhaps the functional: an artist is one who creates sensitively, originally and vitally in one of the arts. But this does not mean that certain mental and emotional characteristics (the so-called artistic temperament) are peculiar to those who create in the arts. Plato was a philosopher, yet he is said to have possessed the temperament of a poet. Freud was a scientist with an "artistic" coloring. And certainly, somewhere in the world, there must be a revolutionary or bohemian or neurotic mathematician to help indicate that the universe shrugs its shoulders at metaphysical limits as applied to human beings. And yet in a major sense his use of the terms is legitimate as well as traditional. Language *is* tradition; and to demolish key segments of a more or less catholic vocabulary is to preclude the majority of discussions.

I said that Mann's position in the artistic tradition is fairly clear; but it is only if one regards him as part of an ages-old stream, a stream of tradition as old as Western society itself.

The position of the artist in Western society has ever been a delicate one, particularly since, with the advent of philosophy and the self-consciousness which it entailed, Plato rejected the poet from his ideal state. It took a poet-philosopher to do that, a man full of the ambivalence and sensuous indulgence of the poet and the fears and moral strivings of the philosopher. But surely Plato, even during his most conservative phase, must have realized that by the same token he ought to have excluded himself. Anthropological studies seem to indicate that among the primitives the artist's position is rather secure because of the general solidarity of the individual with his group, a solidarity based on the primitive's difficulty to distinguish between the individual and the class. Any such innocence which might have existed in Greece was disrupted by the rise of philosophy,

which made the artist's comparative isolation inevitable, since self-consciousness, whether in individuals or in states, inspires moral judgments.

Plato's complaint was, of course, based on the artist's irregularity, his tendency to disorder and the illicit as well as on his aversion to the established order of things. He intimated that the poet's main function was some thing suspiciously close to titillation. His complaint has been echoed many times. This mistrust of the artist stems, apparently, from the notion of the "divine afflatus," the belief that the artist receives his inspiration from the muses or from some other oracular source while in a state of madness, a notion whose modern counterpart finds expression in the conviction that the artist's creations must well up from the unconscious to have real beauty and significance. The role of the Greek oracles, particularly those of Delphi, Dodona and Apollo Didymaeus (which are based on the Egyptian and the Hebraic and those, in turn, on other predecessors) in the establishment of the tradition is clear. The tradition itself is voluminous.

Such an aspect of the artist's position is not without its compensatory side. The artist has found it convenient, for example, to accept and enlarge the "divine afflatus" myth, thus attaining a license denied to lesser mortals, and to exploit advantageously in other directions his so-called naiveté and madness, often however, ending by believing the myth himself. He has cultivated his personality to the point of becoming accentric, not because he has inherently desired to do so but because eccentricity has been more or less required of him by tradition. A basic element in this connection is the individualism of the western world, which has forced the artist, that neurotic and extremist whose business it is to deal with the subjective and the individual, to assume the mantle of the pariah. There have, of course, been variations in the tradition, one of the most evident being found in a contrast of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the eighteenth with its emphasis on reason and the typical, and the nineteenth with its even stronger emphasis on the emotions and the individual. It may be said that the individualism of western society reached its peak in the latter century and that this extreme was prepared by the comparative absence of individualism in the eighteenth.

Nor must one forget the technological side of the new science and its part in determining the position of the artist in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The artist of the last century revolted doubly: against the money-grubbing imperialism of the Industrial Revolution as well as against the stylized passion of the Age of Reason. The artist was very obviously an unwanted man. There was little or no place for him in the midst of a furiously expanding technology at a time when states had little use for the humanitarian and liberal impulses of the artist, little use for the fine arts and perhaps even less for literature, a less tangible form of art (when the tangible was exceptionally important) than architecture, sculpture and painting. All of these forces, then, created that era of proud artistic revolt whose figures so often ended in tragedy: Kleist, Schiller, Novalis, Keats, Byron, Shelley, Pushkin, Lermontov and how many others? Many of the deaths were violent: Kleist shot himself; Pushkin and Ler-

montov were killed in duels; Byron died in the Greek wars; Shelley was drowned in a storm, etc. Irregularity, isolation, vanity, tragedy: these were the norms. One has only to recall names to recognize the truth of this: Schopenhauer, with his terror of assassination, his poodle, his diary with the unprintable references to sex and marriage; Nietzsche, with his severe neurotic strain ending in madness (as with Maupassant); Wagner, with his antisocial traits amounting at times to the frankly criminal, with his mysticism, his violent myths, perfumes and satins; poor Hebbel, having to give up his faithful Elise to marry a beautiful and wealthy actress on the ground that otherwise his talents would have perished in the "miserable struggle for existence"; Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Flaubert; Stefan George and Oscar Wilde and their art for art's sake; Dostoyevsky: gambler, epileptic, economic freebooter—with his experience before the firing squad and then as a convict for four years at Omsk; Pushkin under house arrest for suspected revolutionary activity; Lermontov arrested, courtmartialled Poet" (about Pushkin) addressed to the tsar; Tolstoy's monstrous wrestl- and expelled from the Guards because of his poem "On the Death of the ing with the angel in his effort to atone for the sexual excesses of his youth; Gogol's melancholy, his destruction of some of his manuscripts; Turgeniev's self-imposed exile; half mad Lamb; Shelley's atheism and revolutionary spirit; Van Gogh's ear, his sun worship, his madness . . .

The nineteenth century was, as we have said, an extreme form of the artist's traditional isolation. But there have also been times when the artist's fare was considerably more palatable, times when prosperous states, glorifying in their power, liberally tolerated the artist, sometimes even regarding his attacks upon themselves as not altogether uncomplimentary *divertissements*. Such states were evident during the Mediterranean Renaissance. Others, balancing on the tightrope of tyranny, were supersensitive to criticism, such as Russia in the last century, with her countless emasculation of works of art through a rigid censorship and terrorization of artists with the threat of penal servitude. Germany, Italy and Spain are modern examples of the latter. Much, naturally, depends on tradition and on the personalities of rulers and artists in determining the amount and quality of the artist's freedom. Thus Elizabethan England, in all the burst of toleration following the destruction of the Spanish Armada, still remembered how to censor both the spoken and the printed word. Enlightened despots like Lorenzo d'Medici stimulated art; others, ignorant or barbaric or even moronic, stifled it. And as for the influence of the personalities of artists, it is obvious that figures such as Leonardo, Goethe and Tolstoy inevitably gain greater freedom for lesser men as well as for themselves. One recalls the dramatic moment when the tsar proclaimed Tolstoy "untouchable", beyond the power of Russian terrorism. The fact that Tolstoy's disciples were still persecuted does not detract from the weight of his subsequent attacks on the hulking body of Russian feudalism.

From the preceding it would seem that the artist has steadily been approaching the position of social leper. Have there been counterinfluences?

There have—and again with science as the causal base. The role of science during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was dual. While through the medium of an expanding technology it tended to unify the physical world, to make its parts more interrelated and interdependent, and in this sense began the achievement of that spiritual synthesis which religion had failed to accomplish on a universal scale, at the same time it was destructive in its effect on those myths of religion, philosophy and mores which largely sustained the balance of western civilization. The destructive element increased in proportion to technology's increasing maturation. The geographical synthesis which science was accomplishing was soon found to be insufficiently sustaining spiritually when compared to the deleterious effect of science in imperialism, war and the technological revolution. A new ethic was required, which meant that out of the ashes of the old ethic and out of the atomistic array which was science's humanistic contribution in the last three centuries—out of these a new humanism must be created. That meant imaginative synthesis, legend, myth, tradition: for the achievement of which the artist is indispensable. This counter influence underlines the "respectable" part which the artist will play in the world state, the collective, democratic state of the future. A forecast of his new role can be seen in the Soviet Union, where the artist, who is the aristocrat in terms of living standards, is conscientiously kept out of the front lines during the present conflict, a distinction no other government makes, as far as I know, except indirectly by rejecting for service those artists who happen to be psychoneurotic. But even in America art and politics are already shaking hands. Witness how in the recent presidential campaign artists came into the open with their preferences and how the camapign itself was culminated by a stirring and artistic pre-election-night broadcast by the Democratc Party.

One of Mann's earliest published stories, *Little Herr Friedemann*, is a study of the artist as crippled and outcast, the artist's spiritual deformity, his irregularity, being symbolically expressed by a hunched back. The psychology of the protagonist is Mann's; and while it is undoubtedly melodramatized it is at the same time genuine in tone and direction. All of the familiar notes of Mann's precoccupation with the artist are struck in this early piece: the artist's incapacity for athletics because of his introversion and frailty (this recalls a number of famous literary examples of athletically incapable artists—e.g. Stephen Dedalus in the *Portrait;* the artist as frail is related to the romantic marriage of art and disease), the use of music (with Wagner the favorite) to heighten the elements of yearning and isolation, the artist as pariah: viz. Mann says of Friedemann, "But at length he had become quite used to standing on one side and not taking part." Friedemann hopes for nothing less than a basic union (sexual) with Frau von Rinnlingen, who represents the normal and extrovertive (and one might say cruel) when she rejects him (somewhat cruelly) the blow

is too much for his injured ego and he drowns himself in the river beside her garden. Even in a small tale like *Disillusionment* there is a hint of Mann's ever-present theme: here it is in the artistic perversity of being forever dissatisfied with the actual—a spiritual jadedness very *fin de siecle*. (The story was written in 1896.)

Another early story, *The Dillettante*, must be considered to be largely autobiographical, expressing as it does the feelings of doubt and anxiety of the young man gambling on a career in literature. But it possesses, in addition, a number of interesting overtones, among them being the earliest expression of the mother-artist, father-burgher motif which later appears in *Buddenbrooks*, *Tonio Kroger*, *Death in Venice*, *A Sketch of My Life* and several other places. Part of the story is relevant to the *Buddenbrooks* material which was soon to appear, while part of it hints at *Tonio Kroger* and the motif of yearning for the blue-eyed, blond and extrovertive (the healthy burgher type in Mann's allegorical vocabulary, based on romantic tradition and particularly on Nietzsche), such as the following: "There are men, the favorites of the gods, it would seem, whose happiness is genius and their genius happiness; children of light, who move easily through life with the reflection and image of the sun in their eyes; easy, charming, amiable, while all the world surrounds them with praise, admiration, envy and love—for even envy is powerless to hate them." Mann's decision that happiness (and therefore external success) for him is *de rigueur*, is also seen here at this early date (1897): "I could not permit myself to be unhappy, could not stand the sight of myself in such a role. I should have to hide in the dark like a bat or an owl and gaze with envy at the children of light." But perhaps the most illuminating element in the piece is an implied one. If one equates "dilettante" with "bourgeois artist," the artist as middle man, as official compromiser, one finds the hidden autobiographical core of the story. "Dilettante" here stands as a symbol of the bourgeois artist's tortured striving for light and direction between the Scylla and Charybdis of the burgher on the one hand and the bohemian on the other. Soon, in *Tonio Kroger*, after the strengthening exercise of *Buddenbrooks*, Mann will firmly rationalize his middle position.

In his early period Mann seemingly took sadistic (or perhaps one ought to call it masochistic) pleasure in projecting what he considered to be the artist's spiritual deformities on to his characters in the form of physical ones. *Tobias Mindernickel*, for example, is a portrait of a love-starved, psychopathically sadistic outcast whose cruelty is matched only by the cruelty of Mann's prose. The same is true in *Little Lizzy*, a story of adultery in which the cruelty of Amra toward her unhealthily stout husband, Jacoby, is reminiscent of Gerda von Rinnlingen's cruelty to Friedemann. *Little Lizzy* is particularly interesting because of its early statement by the author on artists. It is an amusing statement because in it the author's indignation suddenly bursts through the arctic objectivity of his prose. Speaking of Alfred Lautner, the young musician who is Amra's lover, Mann says that "He belonged to the present-day race of small artists

who do not demand the utmost of themselves, whose first requirement is to be jolly and happy, who employ their pleasing little talents to heighten their personal charms. It pleases them to play in society the role of the naive genius. Consciously childlike, entirely unmoral and unscrupulous, merry and self-satisfied as they are, and healthy enough to enjoy even their disorders, they are agreeable even in their vanity, so long as that has not been wounded. But woe to these wretched little poseurs when serious misfortune befalls them, with which there is no coquetting, and when they can no longer be pleasant in their own eyes." Mann, therefore, has already learned to speak in the voice of the artist as well as the bourgeois. He will not tolerate any trifling with art on the part of the healthy ones (he describes Lautner as blond, with a sunny smile in his eyes), just as they will not tolerate his trifling in their affairs. It is also amusing to note that whereas Mann considers happiness *de rigueur*, he heartily resents it in those whose primary aim is to be happy—i.e. in those untainted by conscience and *weltschmerz*. Thus his middle role gradually reveals itself even in these very early pieces, written before *Buddenbrooks*.

In *Buddenbrooks*, while paying his literary debt to realism and to his nineteenth century masters, Tolstoy, Flaubert and the Scandinavians, Mann considerably clarified his notions concerning art and the artist, examining the problem of burgher vs. bohemian, in his comparison of Thomas and Christian Buddenbrook, portraying the former as a stalwart but decaying burgher and Christian as the dilettante bohemian suffering from neuresthenia and hypochondria. Mann probably considered himself as occupying a position in between. The theme of art as related to disease is here developed with exceptional vigor by means of the study of the decay of a burgher family through increasing refinement resulting in disease and art. The figure of little Hanno, last of the Buddenbrooks, is the most intriguing in the book for at least two reasons: first, because he stands closest in an autobiographical relation to the author and second, because he is the inspiration for the most beautiful and characteristic passages in the novel. Besides, Hanno foreshadows with precarious frailty the coming Tonio Kroger. *Buddenbrooks*, in this connection, is in several ways a preparatory exercise for *Tonio Kroger*. Among other considerations, the success of the novel, artistically and externally, encouraged Mann to speak of himself openly henceforth in terms of the artist and to take a more positive position as middle man.

Tonio Kroger is too well known to justify a detailed discussion. Suffice it to say that in it Mann brings to a crescendo his previously faint articulatons regarding himself as artist. That he was expressing the notions and yearnings of his time, particularly among the artistic crowd, was evidenced by the warm reception which the tale received on its appearance in 1903. In Mann's own words (1936), this tale and the group of stories of which it is the spiritual center, "all bear the impress of much melancholy and ironic reflection on the subject of art and the artist: his isolation and equivocal position in the world of reality, considered socially and metaphysically

and as a result of his double bond with nature and spirit." The story is delightful because of its lyric bloom and its intellectual core, the latter found in Tonio's conversations with his friend, Lisabeta Ivanovna. Here one comes upon Mann's disgust with bohemian apparell, his reiteration of the romantic idea that simple feelings are banal and that "only the irritations and icy ecstasies of the artist's corrupted nervous system are artistic," his suspicion of the artist-type, his desire for the "normal," his insistence that "The kingdom of art increases and that of health and innocence declines on this earth," his contempt for the dilettante and so on. Despite its evidence of a strangely prolonged adolescence in the author, the tale portrays perfectly the psychology of the sensitive young outcast who seeks acceptance and "regularity." It is a blood-brother to Joyce's *Portrait;* only there Stephen is proudly scornful of the regular, while Tonio regards the regular with irony not unmixed with yearning and compassion.

Tristan, The Hungry, The Infant Prodigy and Gladius Dei all center around *Tonio Kroger* in time and spirit and continue Mann's probing into the psychology of the artist. They precede his work on *Royal Highness* and the stories which more or less accompanied his second novel, among them *At the Prophet's* and *Felix Krull.* Around this time, also, Mann composed his only play, *Fiorenza;* and it too, as almost everything he touched in those days, was concerned with the motif of isolation and the artist. *At the Prophet's* is a satire on the bohemian artist and is similar in tone to *Tristan,* which satirizes the aesthete. In *Felix Krull* the theme of artist as criminal, which was hinted at in *The Infant Prodigy,* is fully developed. And so on . . . the point being that not until the First World War was Mann's conception of the artist as isolated seriously shaken. Until that time all of his major figures—Hanno, Tonio, Klaus Heinrich, Felix Krull, Aschenbach—lived in isolated spheres removed from action and direct social responsibility. So much for Mann's prewar period. (I am quite aware of the fact that my treatment is growing increasingly sketchy as it deals with the approaching years of Mann's development. This is deliberate. I intend, for instance, to neglect *Death in Venice, Royal Highness* and the essays, the reason being that certain of Mann's works need more attention than others in reference to my present theme. Besides, I have no desire to be exhaustive.

Mann's *Magic Mountain* period stems from his experience in the First World War. The war found him embroiled in bitter controversies with his brother Heinrich, who, as spokesman for a European and democratic enlightenment, opposed Mann's Germanic, nationalistic and sometimes Prussianistic views, views which expressed in political terms his heaviness of character and his temperamental conservatism. Seen from today's perspective, Mann's behavior during the war seems strongly reactionary. It seemed no less so to many of his opponents during the controversies. In his efforts to defend his position while at the same time searching his mind and conscience, Mann gathered material which in 1918 appeared as *The*

Reflections of a Non-Political Man. He has been attacked for this book on many grounds and on many occasions, some quite recent. He has, however, repudiated it; and it is worth noting that he has never had it translated into English along with his other didactic works.

Mann himself has indicated that without the experience of the *Reflections* he could not have written *The Magic Mountain. The Reflections* cleared the political and metaphysical ground for the novel. It cleared the emotional ground as well. As though in atonement for his political isolation during the war, Mann makes Hans Castorp, his *alter ego* in the novel, leave the sanitarium, where he has been seduced for seven years, in order to take up arms and thus merge his identity with that of a larger identity of international importance. Castorp is not, of course, presented as an artist; he is, however, an artist on two grounds: because he is Mann's *alter ego* and because of his keen acceptance and synthesis of experience. But Castorp is not, like Heinrich Mann, a man of action or of political responsibility. He is still, like the author, a man feeling his way along the misty road to politics. *The Magic Mountain* is simply the education of Hans Castorp, but it gives us no indication as to how Castorp applies that education except for the detail of his breaking the spell of Davos and going off to the wars.

Mann's third period fills the gap of the second, for Joseph is portrayed not only in reference to his education but also to its political and intellectual implications. Joseph becomes the provider not for the Egyptians alone but for his own people as well. He is a kind of Goethe-figure in his role of Pharaoh's right-hand man, reminding one of Goethe's relation to the Duke of Weimar and the portrayal of Goethe in *The Beloved Returns.* And of course it is amply clear that Joseph is Mann's alter ego; more than that, Mann deliberately draws him as an artist-type. In Joseph can be traced all of Mann's other major characters as well as Mann's biography. And the novel itself falls neatly into three sections, corresponding to Mann's three periods: the period prior to the first pit, in which Joseph is the vain dreamer who sets himself off from his brothers and resembles Tonio; the Potiphar period, in which Joseph's Egyptian (cosmopolitan) education takes place and in which he resembles Hans Castorp; and the Pharaoh period, in which Joseph, now a political man, acts as the provider for the people. It is the early part of Mann's Joseph period which contains *Mario and the Magician*, the symbolic and prophetic story of Italian fascism. Later *The Beloved Returns* appears. The Moses story falls into the latter part of the period. In it we have the artist as inspirer, provider and molder all in one. Mann several times refers to Moses as a sculptor chiseling and blasting and carving his people. This conception brings to mind the lines from Heine's *Confessions* concerning Moses: "I failed to perceive that Moses, notwithstanding his enmity to art, was nevertheless himself a great artist, and possessed the true artistic spirit. Only, this artistic spirit with him, as with his Egyptian countrymen, was applied to the colossal

and the imperishable. But not, like the Egyptians, did he construct his works of art from bricks and granite, but he built human pyramids and carved human obelisks."

It is Mann's final period which contains the rise of Hitler, Mann's exile and his subsequent polemical activities against the Nazis by means of pamphlets and BBC broadcasts to the German underground. It is obvious, then, that the two pits in the Joseph tale correspond to the two external forces responsible for Mann's political maturation—the First World War and German fascism. Mann's third period is climaxed by the publication of *Joseph thé Provider*, the last volume of the tetralogy, and with Mann's publicly-declared pro-Roosevelt stand in the recent election, the latter taken to the extent of lectures urging people to vote for the President.

Thus we have arrived at one of the least equivocal and most mature political acts on the part of an artist whose early career was steeped in emotional and political isolationism.

Charles Neider's essay on Thomas Mann in this issue is the first of a series of critical essays to appear regularly in RMR and to be known as

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American Child IV

By PAUL ENGLE

I.

The boy next door came over. Innocent
She gave him all her toys on all the floors
And through the little house of her excitement
Ran, opening windows, banging doors,
So lost in ecstacy that her hand shook.
Gratitude and gift were all her mind.
But when she stooped to get her favorite book
For him, he laughed and struck her from behind.

The savagery of the scared mouse is monstrous.
So in the fury of her fear she turned
With one mad shout, almost delirious,
Beating him with her book until it split,
And learned revenge in violence, and learned
All that revengeful shame that follows it.

2.

Tearing off her reticence, the way
We peel the tight bark from a live birch tree,
She told us the layered sorrow of that day:
She pushed him down and hit him with her knee,
And would not let him up, not knowing why,
And would not lead him where his hat was thrown,
And laughed when he ran. Then told us with a cry
How shame struck through her like a falling stone.
We could not give the power of pure forgiveness

But only wait and watch humiliation
Enter, and live in her own pure aliveness,
While like a homeless pup who came to whine
Remorse snarled loud at her in accusation
And grief grew on her like a guardian vine.

3.

Where is north? Is there a north in me
Where I'm the only person that can go?
I think there is, and in it I can be
Cold when I want to. I can make it snow.
She thought of that and shivered. Where's the real
North in the world? Maybe I can take
My own north there, and maybe I can feel
How cold a snow two norths together make.

And she will go on asking for direction—
The naked north, the evening west, bird south—
Until, so gently there seems no connection
Tomorrows fall on her like drifted snow
And she drives back that question in her mouth,
Knowing that she knows she will never know.

4.

Her dog, tongue out, tail friendly, seemed to float
Over the field. But a man rushed out with a great
Cry and kicked him in the ribs and throat
For nothing but the ecstacy of hate.
She suffered every blow in every bone
And did not want to see, but would not leave,
And learned of foulness she had never known
And learned of evil, but would not believe.

Yet when she knelt and her indignant hand
Fell with incalculable grief and lightness
She learned all evil lived where all men stand,
Snarled from the earth, from the breathed air above,
And knew then in a sudden blinding brightness
That love is hate of all we do not love.

5.

Look, she called, the mirror's in my face,
Then laughed to find her face was in the mirror,
And learned the power of each thing in its place,
And all the worlds in her one world came clearer:
A world called see for looking at the sun,
Another world for touch and one for hear,
A world for taste and one for smell, and one
Large and dark and everywhere, for fear.

All of those worlds are in her, and they grow
Cell by secreted cell and bone by bone
To merge in one long memory named—know.
And then the years when world is merely—be.
No past, no future, an old woman alone
Remembering the time when she had memory.

The Promise

By BLANCHE CANNON

THE door closed behind them and they stood in the impersonal dusk of the rented room. They were both young, the girl even younger than the boy. She stood silent in the dimness a moment, then lifted her hand to the switchplate on the wall and turned on the light.

"It's nice and clean," she said in a false, bright voice, looking at the metal bed and dresser, the green Congoleum rug, and the limp lace curtains hanging from a rod of tarnished brass. "Course it's not as nice as the hotel we stayed at the first night. But then we can't expect first nights to go on forever, can we?"

The youth at her side didn't answer. Fumbling in the pocket of a new, cheap slack suit of peacock blue, he took out a package and thrust a cigarette into the crack of his mouth. He was a tense youth, slight as a jockey, with a flinty face, eyes colorless as water against browned skin, and light hair thinning at the crown.

"It's nice and cool too," the girl said.

Still the youth didn't answer.

She sighed, set her traveling bag on a chair, and walked over to the bed. She felt the mattress for softness, then threw herself across it, kicking the pumps from her feet with a light clatter. Her fine, pale hair fell back from her brow and shone on the coarse, cotton spread. Lifting her arm to her face, she covered her eyes, the gesture making her breasts stand up under her thin silk blouse. For some time she lay with closed eyes and set lips. Then removing her arm, she opened her eyes and her mouth quivered. Turning her body toward the youth she patted the bed at her side.

"Squee, Squee, come here."

He went on smoking.

She watched him a moment, then sitting up on the bed, doubled her legs under her tailor fashion and asked anxiously, "You're not mad at me, are you, Squee?"

"Hell, no."

"Then what's the matter? Why don't you want to kiss me?"

"It's too hot. Jees, Clarabelle, is that all you think about, just making love?"

"It's all you're supposed to think about on your honeymoon, isn't it?"

"I don't know. I got other things on my mind."

She bit her lip. "I know you have. You're thinking you're sorry we got married, aren't you?"

When he didn't deny this, she rubbed her eyes impatiently like a child determined not to cry, and said quietly, "It's all my fault. I know that now. I know you're not the marrying kind. I should have——" She paused and blushed so hotly the roots of her hair showed white against the scalp——"I should have let you have me without."

"Cut it out!" he cried angrily. "I wanted it this way. But I don't see why just cause a guy gets married a dame thinks she can own him. Why she's gotta make him give up his whole life."

Tears shone on her lashes and she blinked rapidly to keep them from falling. "But I didn't make you give up your whole life. I only asked you to give up racing. Oh, Squee, I just couldn't have stood it if you'd gone on!"

"Why not? I was winning good money, wasn't I? A hell of a lot more'n I'll make clerking in that gent's clothes store. Jees, I just can't see me peddling neckties!"

"But you'll get used to it, Squee. And maybe after a while you'll get a raise."

"I don't care about the dough."

"Then what do you care about?"

The lines that cut his face from mouth to nostril deepened. "*Me!*" he said harshly. "What I am and what I want to be. All my life I've been nuts about cars——things with motors. When I was just a little squirt I stole the motor from my mom's washing machine and made myself a soap-box racer. It worked too. My dad walloped me for stealing and when he found out I was playing hookey to drive it round the streets he smashed it up."

He paused and doused his cigarette in the ashtray. "I guess that was the last time I ever bawled."

He looked at her and seeing her face had forgotten its own misery and was warm with tenderness for the small, bad boy his words evoked, he went on more quickly, "But it didn't do me no good. I still played hookey. I started spending all my spare time hanging round the pits at the Fair Grounds where they were running Midget Races. Then, in a couple of years, I got a job, night shift at a garage. sluicing floors and sweeping up and sometimes driving the cars up and down the ramp when the other guy got too sleepy. Finally I saved enough to buy my first old second-hand Midget. She had a Willys motor and her body was all shot, but I worked on her and tuned her up till she went as smooth as any Offie on the track——almost. I didn't have no sponsor and I didn't have no pit crew to work on her between races, but I entered almost every night. And when I started winning a little dough I just told my dad and everybody else to go to hell. And now——" his voice rose

——"now when everyone who reads the sport page knows my name and I've got a real Offenhauser and can take a purse on any track in the country, you——"

He stopped, realizing from her face that he had told her all this many times before.

"Ah, hell, what's the use? You wouldn't understand, a dame like you. All you want is to live safe."

"No," she said, her voice trembling. "That isn't all I want. If that was all I wanted I wouldn't have run off with you. I want you, Squee. I want to be together, not just a little while but all our lives. I want to be able to wake up in the mornings without thinking maybe it'll be our last day. That maybe you'll crack up and——"

"I never have yet, have I?"

A little shudder ran over her. "No. But sometime you'd be bound to. Maybe in a week. Maybe not for a year. But you can't race and not get caught. You can't tempt fate like that!"

"You tempt fate when you stand on your two feet. Hell, you might as well not go on living as be afraid to die."

"But a married man's got to go on living," she said proudly. "And you did promise, Squee. You said you loved me and you promised."

"I know!" he shouted, striking the metal dresser with his fist. "I know without you reminding me every five minutes. I must've been nuts that night, but I know I promised."

She winced, then bent her head. Her pale hair fell forward and hid her face. For a long time it was quiet in the room, for during the three nights and days since they eloped the girl had learned how to weep silently.

The youth stood with his back to the door, his face bitter, his eyes cold. Feeling his pocket for a cigarette he found the pack empty. He crushed it in his fingers, tossed it to the floor and kicked it into the corner. Then without looking at the girl he paced the room. After some time he went to the bed, leaned over the foot and said gruffly, "Hell, kid, let's not go on like this. I never meant to make ya cry. It's just that I'm kinda jumpy, trying to get used to things being so different."

The hair that hid her face rippled as if she sobbed behind it. Otherwise she didn't stir.

He sighed, shook his head, and touched her shoulder. "I'm outa smokes," he said. "I'll go down and buy some and pick up a paper. Maybe it'll tell what we can do in this burg tonight."

Slowly the girl's head lifted.

"C'mon, kid. what d'ya say?"

She shook back her hair, forced the corners of her mouth up in a smile and got down from the bed. She looked at him a moment humbly. Then as if by saying such words as other wives said, by pretending this honeymoon were like other honeymoons and this youth like other husbands, she could make her marriage what she wanted it, she said brightly,

"Why, yes, do go get some. And a paper too. Maybe there's a movie we can see. I'll be getting our things unpacked. Don't be too long, will you, Squee?"

They moved with the crowd up a cleated ramp to a platform illuminated with sodium lights. The youth bought a pillow and a program from an usher and, taking the girl's elbow, led her to an iron-railed cubicle that held six seats.

"Pretty nifty, huh, Clarabelle, a box all to ourselves."

The girl nodded and smiled, her lips grey in the weird light. Bending her knees woodenly, she sat on the cushion he placed for her. The boy sat beside her, straightened his bony shoulders, and inhaled deeply.

"Isn't this swell? Movies are OK for winter, but in summer you oughta do things outdoors. Feels nice and cool here, doesn't it?"

The girl breathed obligingly. A smell of close packed, sweaty bodies, peanuts, hotdogs, dregs of beer, and an unmistakable odor that betrayed the nearness of the lavatories came to her nostrils.

"But I wanted to see Charles Boyer," she said bleakly.

The youth ignored this. "Not a bad little track for a burg," he said. "A fifth of a mile."

She looked down where he pointed. Directly in front of their box was the timing stand with a microphone and timing devices set up on it. Over a double barricade of wire mesh and wooden fence, was the track, an oval of asphalt shining blackup under the floods. Within it was a smaller, green-grassed oval, and in the center of this space stood a red fire-truck equipped with chemical extinguisher and an ambulance attended by two white coated internes.

"It's like most any track," she said quietly.

The corner of the youth's mouth jerked. "Gimme the program," he said. "I wanta see if I know any of the guys driving here."

She gave him the folder and looked down at her hands as he read, her face white and pinched, as if some fear drew the flesh back tight against the bone. It seemed to her that a long time passed. From a platform at the end of the grandstand a band played Roll Out the Barrel, and in the next box two men in polo shirts and levis and two girls in slacks bought beer and peanuts from a butcher boy with a shaven skull. Two officials, an announcer, and a flagman with his hands full of signals, gathered around the timing stand. They talked together and clapped each other on the back. From the way their mouths moved she knew that they were joking.

At last the youth slapped the program on his thigh. "Say, what d'ya think? Old Slim Ecklund's racing here. You remember him from Denver, don't ya?"

She shook her head.

"What? You don't remember old Slim? Why, me and him was regular buddies for awhile. I wonder what made him drift out here."

Again she shook her head.

He opened the program once more and pretended to read, then scratched the side of his lean face. "Say, it'd be a shame to be in the same town as Slim and not say hello. I think I'll just mosey down to the pits—–just to say Hi to old Slim."

She didn't hear his words, but by the sick knotting of her insides she knew what he had said.

The Beer Barrel Polka ended and the band began to play the Anvil Chorus with more emphasis on volume than on tune. Half way through the second chorus the officials sat on the bench behind the timing device, and the announcer picked up the mike and raised his hand.

"Ladies and Gentlemennnnnnn!" The amplified voice, rolling resonantly up the grandstand, seemed a monstrous thing to come from his small, mustachioed mouth. "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Time Trials will begin. These trials will determine the positions in the Main Event. Each car will go round the track three times. It will be timed each lap and the best time of the three will be official. All right now, Ladies and Gentlemen, we're ready. The gate at the end of the track is opening and here comes the first Midget. I can tell by the applause that you who follow the races recognize this little green car. But for the benefit of you who are here for the first time, it's Slim Ecklund driving nummmmmmber sevennnnnn!"

The crowd cheered, and the green car, no larger than a toy, rolled forward.

The girl sat alone in the box. As the cars, red, orange, blue, green, black and white, came on the track and went around, she stared at the open program on her knee, and noted the time made by each in the space opposite the driver's name, the pencil on the slick page moving jerkily, as if her hands were cold.

Fifteen cars went around, times varied from 16 flat to 19.2. The crowd, seeing no more names on the program, settled down to pop and hotdogs, but again the gate opened and a shining yellow car appeared and rolled up to the timing stand. The announcer leapt to his feet.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a surprise for you tonight. Here is another name to add to your programs. A name well known to Midget enthusiasts. Ladies and Gentlemen, Squee Jones of Denver!"

The crowd went wild. They stomped and cheered and whistled. But the driver in the cockpit seemed not to hear. Under the floods his head appeared bare and bony, the indistinguishable hair merging into a profile impassive as a skull. Only his hand moved. Reaching into his pocket he took out a cigarette, lit it, and exhaled a stream of smoke. Turning toward the crowd he looked straight at the girl in the box behind the timing stand. For a moment their eyes met. Then just as the flagman dropped the flag, he waved the cigarette in bravado and defiance, and the car shot forward. A thin, horizontal thread of smoke floated on

the air where he had been.

"The fool," she whispered. "He hasn't even got a helmet on!"

The Time Trials were followed by the Qualifying Heats. Then it was Intermission. The band blared an unrecognizable tune, the peanut butcher came again and the people in the next box bought more peanuts and more beer. When the shaven-headed boy walked past her the girl touched his sleeve.

"Some root beer, please." Her voice grated dryly in her throat.

"How many?"

"Just one."

Hearing her voice, the man in the next box, a burley laborer who smelled of his day's work, turned and said, "That's right, sister. You need to wet your whistle before the Main Event. You'll be doing plenty of yelling then."

"Yes," she said, and put her lips to the straw.

"The Main Event's the feature of the show," he said with the expansiveness of the fan. "The ten best cars, and one's that won the Qualifying Heat'll race fifty laps. That's ten miles."

She nodded, her hand tightening on the bottle of pop.

"It sure is exciting," he said, wiping beer foam from his lips, "Sometimes they get up to as much as sixty per. Usually about half the cars crack up and leave the track. Tonight should be a killer-diller with that new driver in. This your first race sister?"

She shook her head, loathing his friendly, beef-red face, hating him for his gusto for the hazards of the race, and the hundreds like him who drank beer and watched boys risk their lives. She felt helpless, tiny, pitted against their number, defeated in her oneness, and alone. She turned away and with a sharp intake of breath, sucked the sweet brown liquid through the straw. Her stomach recoiled and she set the bottle down quickly.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, the Main Event!"

The gate opened and the little cars, pushed by attending pit crews, crunched up the graveled incline to the track. The girl turned her head and saw Squee come first in the yellow car. The wind lifted his hair and she saw how he raised his face to it, and though she could not see for distance, she knew how his nostrils flared to its scent, the thrilling, familiar scent of the track, the smell of asphalt, tires, petrol, dust, crowd-sweat, and the sweet, intrusive smell of the night beyond floodlights. And in her loneliness and her forsakeness, longing terribly for some communion with him, it seemed to her that these smells were in her own nostrils and the speed thrill in her blood. As if it were she down there in the cockpit, she felt the even roll of tires on the track and from the corner of her eyes saw the double row of cars behind, red, blue, green, orange, white and black, blurred and merged and wavering in the floods into a stream of rippling color exciting as a banner.

The flagman took his position along the fence and she felt how

Squee's heartbeats quickened and how he felt them not in his breast but in his hands curved round the wheel. She felt his belly tense against the buckled leather of the safety belt and the muscles of his thighs twitching to bear down on the throttle.

The flagman gave the signal to get ready and she felt how Squee's lips closed over dry teeth and how the motor purred beneath his foot like a cat about to spring. The flag dropped at last, the drivers crouched in the cockpits, no longer boys in bright helmets but impersonal extensions of gear, steering wheel and throttle, the crowd gave one rising yell, and the cars were off. The girl shuddered spasmodically and covered her face with her hands.

She kept her hands pressed to her eyes, but against the pale pink membrane of the lids she seemed to see the race——the cars going round and round, tiny, roaring, speed attenuated, bunching at the curves into slots of seething color, nosing, cutting, crowding at the turns. And though her eyes were shut, her open ears heard cheers and motors throb like fevered hearts and tires tear the track with a sound like the ripping of fabric. Without opening her eyes she took her hands away and with a kind of spastic groping dug her fingers in her ears. But still she was aware. For the very stand beneath her rocked and trembled with the stamping and applause.

And she knew that though at first the race was of ten cars, now it was of two, that though ten cars still sped around the track, the crowd watched only Slim Ecklund in green number seven and Squee in the shining yellow. She knew now yellow was ahead, now green, now yellow for full half a lap, only to lose ground when two slow cars impeded at the turn. Now green alongside, now yellow's snout ahead, now yellow's hood, now all of yellow's body, brilliant, brave, hurtling toward the turn with green to heel. But on the bend, a lone white car, laps behind, took the curve, then with a sound that wasn't heard, but somehow felt as a break in the tremendous rhythm, its motor limped, its oil line broke, and black oil spurted out. The white car came to a stop across the track.

Frantic flagmen stationed around the oval flagged warning——cars shot into the center with a sputter of shut motors. Yellow with a scream of tires, skidded round white, spun, and might have righted. But green came round the curve on two wheels, missed white, and careening, rocking from side to side, completely out of control, reared up and with metallic thunder, rode over the yellow cockpit and the unhelmeted driver.

There was silence. The girl felt it in the fingertips that pressed her ears. Slowly she took away her hands, lowered them, and fumbling for the arms of the folding chair, gripped them till the metal bit her flesh. Forcing trembling eyelids open with an effort of her will, she looked not at the track but at the crowd.

They were quiet, scarcely breathing, but in the staring eyes was

a look of frozen violence, inhuman, pitiless, satisfied, as if they'd got their money's worth at last. With a little moan, she slipped from her chair and fell forward on her knees.

"They said they didn't know you had a wife," she sobbed to the sheeted, bandaged form on the high hospital bed. "Even Slim Ecklund didn't know. He said you didn't tell him. He was crying. His arm was broken. He——"

A nurse, rustling starched skirts, came to the bedside and touched the girl's shoulder.

"You mustn't talk. If you do you'll have to leave the room. He doesn't hear you anyway."

There was no motion underneath the sheets, but his head, turbaned, blindfolded with bandages, turned, and he whispered, "Let——her talk, I——can hear——OK."

The nurse smoothed the sheet with professional, light hands, then said to the girl as if the form on the bed were beyond hearing, beyond understanding, "The doctor said no one should talk to him. You can tell him what you have to say later."

His voice came again, whispering with feeble impatience, "Later'll be too late. You let her talk——and get out of here."

With a frightened look at the bed and a warning shake of her head at the girl, the nurse rustled from the room. There was silence for a long time, then he said, "Get closer, kid."

The girl dropped on her knees and laid her head ever so carefully, ever so lightly, beside his on the pillow.

"I'm real close now," she said softly. "Oh, Squee, do you hurt very bad?"

"No, kid, I can't feel anything at all."

Her face twisted wryly. Tears welled in her eyes and dropped from her face to the pillow. "Oh, Squee, why did you do it? Where did you get the car?"

"It was just there," he said, and though his voice was so weak she had to strain to hear, she caught the quality of wonder in it. "Some guy——had brought it down from Frisco——to try to find a buyer. When I went to the pits——to say hello to——Slim——there it was, as if it waited for me."

"Oh, Squee," she wept aloud, "how could you forget your promise? How could you?"

A grimace of pain distorted his face below the bandages. "Don't do that, kid. Don't cry. Listen what I got to tell ya. The fellows——the drivers in the race'll put up a little extra dough for ya. They always do when a guy——they always do. There's extra car keys in my bag at the hotel. You can drive yourself back home."

"Alone?"

"Sure, kid. You'll be OK."

Her weeping rose hysterically and she clutched at the sheet where she thought his hand should be. " Oh, Squee, I can't. I can't stand to go go back alone!"

His voice came wearily, drowsily from the pillow. "Don't take on, kid. You'll be OK."

"But I'm not crying for myself, I'm crying for you!"

His face twitched, his mouth jerked at the corner, a wet, red froth appeared and spread over his lips and chin. As if coming out on the trickle of blood, his voice said thinly, "Hell, kid, I'll be OK. It's best like this. I never would have been no good at peddling neckties."

———————

Two Poems

By SONIA RAIZISS

THE DEDICATED

Her formal figure,
Black-petalled cloud
Of possibility
That's paced with sensuous rigor:
O person in a crowd
Of private drapery.
To have seen her face,
The still humanity
With slightnesses
That one renouncing act
Has patterned for divinity—
Divided her from life
By one inviolable fact
In a tower of determined dress.

Unbuild her, think her,
Express her bright body
To other than God- -
How should it differ
But by the mind,
The vow, the blind
Blessedness?

Here moves a pleasant
Priest, most neat
And most present
To the pure paraclete,
The clutched book.
By beauty of meaning his look
Is that unconscious husband
Of the gliding nun
In some prothalamic mind,
Where thought and sense
In mutual regard
Seduce the sorely immortal
And kind with kind.

Where lives the lost excellence
Of the never born:
Out of virgin and the unicorn
Heloise and Abelard
Thais and the passionate monk
Time and the espoused Wink?

What God-idea gelds
Him and her
Of the avatar,
What Ghost
Shall not come
From pressure of the Thumb
Upon the living host,
This man, this woman—
What Christ human?

SONIA RAIZISS

THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE

Weeping and wine greaten my eyes
And crowd them with important vision:
I think I see an old derision
Opening God's grinding teeth;
I see my husband killing lies
With word in hand and blood in the other—
Poor lover, wastes his seed to father
Vital families of death.

The prodigal glass and tear through tear
Hallucinate the violent room:
Is the rhythm of his returning breath
Approaching? though pity wrings my fear
And I shall cry for his bad dream,
My evening body, sore and tired,
Expects—still ripe and still desired—
Imaginative juice instead of doom.

All Summers Go Away

By TESS CARLOS

HE stood by the fountain. She had told him there were fish here and a muscular angel throwing water over his shoulder. "The stone angel fell down," he said.

"Oh."

"See. Look you can tell where it got knocked off."

She could see scales of cement on the pedestal.

"Can you remember when you used to play here?" he said.

"Where is it now?"

"They've probably taken it off down to the cellar."

She looked down into the pool. Once the stone angel threw water over his shoulder. She had stood there letting it rebound on her hands and on her blue pinafore. But now the water was dark. There were large floating pieces of green just under the surface.

"The fish I guess are gone too," he said.

"I can't see them."

"Well, I guess they're gone." He climbed up on the rim. The green ivy hung listlessly where he stepped on it. "Oh, look," he said. "I thought I saw something."

She bent down but the sun was behind her and she could see only the dark green water mirroring her face and shoulders.

"Look," he yelled, "See didn't you see it then?"

"No," she said, "what was it like?"

"A kind of a shadow," he said.

She looked hard into the dark green water.

She could remember back only to the beginning of summer and how one morning when Mama came into the room the sun had come in brightly through the blinds and made strings of light across her bed. She hid her face in the pillow away from the sun. Mama sat on the bed and ran warm fingers down inside her pajamas and blew into them until they belled up like sails. Mama's breath that smelled of coffee and melted butter crept up her neck.

"Baby is a sleepy head." Mama rubbed up her shoulder blades. She lay on her stomach, her eyes closed.

"My baby is such a sleepy, sleepy, sleepy." She felt Mama's fingers poking her in the ribs. She turned around her hair falling into her eyes.

Some of it got caught between her head and the pillow. She had to wiggle to get it loose.

Mama tickled her again and she laughed lying on the bed with the sun coming in brightly through the closed blinds. She could remember only to the beginning of summer.

Every morning Papa came down to the kitchen rubbing his mustache between his fingers. He banged his right hand on the red-patterned table cloth. "Ah, here we are eating again," he said; then clapped his hands hard before he pulled out the chair to sit down. He fed the red-patterned napkin down the front of his neck until only a little of it fluttered as he moved about on his chair, turning toward the coffee to bend down to the cup and sip it noisily, turning to face Mama squarely as he fumbled among the brown pieces of toast for one that was very crisp, turning to look down at her as she sat in the low chair and tried to make her elbows reach over the top of the table.

"Must I drink my milk, Mama?" Mama sat across the table from her cutting up pieces of toast. "Here baby, I've cut up your toast," she would say very soon. Mama always sat there letting Papa play the game alone.

Papa turned around from his coffee. "And why does she not like her milk, Helen?" Papa turned frowning across the red-patterned cloth at Mama. The napkin fluttered. Papa had long fingers. The nails were hard. Once she had tried to bite one of the nails. It did not bend in her teeth. Papa had laughed at her and she had laughed too holding on to his finger.

"And why do you not like your milk?" Papa's eyes were jumping laughter. This was the game of the summer. This was the game that she would repeat until all the other games were forgotten. And when this game was lost?

"And why do you not like your milk?" Papa asked her. And when this game was lost.

"It's too white, Papa."

"A good color, white." He lifted up his cup and put its lip against her glass of milk. A tiny thread of coffee spread out on her milk and she watched it dissolve.

"Now you have coffee to drink," Papa said feeling a piece of toast with his long fingers to see if it was crisp.

"Now I have coffee to drink," she said drinking the glass and pretending that she was drinking coffee like Papa.

The sun that came through the window was weak and she could look at it. She no longer had to lift up her face to see through the open door. She waited for Mama to come and then she heard her name called, "Come on down, baby, and eat."

The sun was weak and she could look at it. Mama had not come to wake her up. She was going to forget the summer. She was always going to have to forget. She would learn another way to wake up, another way to run down the stairs, another way to sit at the table with Mama and Papa.

"*See, didn't you see it then?*"

"*No, what was it like?*"

"*A kind of a shadow.*"

"Papa had to go down to work early," Mama said. The table had the same red-patterned cloth. Papa's chair stood up against the table. And when this game was lost.

"Must I drink my milk, Mama?" Papa should turn now, his long fingers among the pieces of toast and Papa should say.

"Baby, I have work to do. Hurry up and finish eating. The summer's gone and I have to change all the furniture and all the drapes."

"I want some more jelly, Mama," she said. The jelly is red and warm in the weak sun.

"You know where to get it. Now you go and dust the chairs when you finish your milk." Mama I will flutter the dust off the room and the game is lost.

Mama piled up dishes in the deep sink, then looked for the wash cloth. She found it, a tip out, under the piles, and she pulled it out while the dishes rattled down between her hands.

"Must I drink my milk, Mama?" She thought that she could taste again the soft musky trace of coffee in the creamy milk. But Mama was piling up the dishes again. Then Mama pulled them down to look for a bar of soap.

He made a line of sand down her back, letting the wet grains pour out from between his fingers. When she moved the sand rolled down the sides into her bathing suit. It stuck to the edges of the cloth where the skin was dark, then white inside. The sand tickled the skin.

"That's so you'll remember me," he said, body brown in the hot sun.

"As an itch," she teased.

"An ever present sensation."

"I'll remember," she told him. She was on her stomach, her head on the wet smooth sand.

"What will you remember?" He was down by her ear, breathing into her hair.

"The lighthouse that's up the beach. It's long and white."

"A worthy thing to remember."

"The boardwalk that's dusty and bright and noisy. You get sand in your shoes when you walk there."

"Sure." All summers went away.

"And I play pin ball machines on the walk. They light up. All colors. The penny ones are more fun."

"Is that all," he said, "that you will remember?" He got up on his elbow and gave her a cigarette.

She bent down, the cigarette hanging between her lips. And he put the match against it. "Don't get over so far or I might burn you," he said. When her cigarette was lighted, he put his arm around her and waved the match gently in the air until suddenly it went out.

BOOKS

THEORY OF SYMBOLISM

By René Wellek

GERMAN philosophy after Nietzsche is almost unknown to English readers, with the exception of a few specialists. Among major German philosophical works of this century only Husserl's *Ideas* and Nicolai Hartmann's *Ethics* have been translated. Thus a book in English by Ernst Cassirer*, who after years of exile in Sweden and England, has been called to Yale, is doubly welcome: not only for its own sake but also as a representative of the rich world of speculation and historical study from which it comes. Cassirer belongs to a group of brilliant intellectual historians who have scarcely a parallel in England or America, unless we make an exception for Mr. A. O. Lovejoy. Dilthey, Troeltsch, Max Weber, and in the more narrow field of German literary history, men like Rudolf Unger or Konrad Burdach could be mentioned. Cassirer is comparable only to Dilthey in the sweep and mass of his productions: they include a three-volume *History of Epistemology* and books on Renaissance philosophy, on Descartes, on the Cambridge Platonists, on Leibniz, on the Philosophy of Enlightenment, and many essays on the great German poets in relation to philosophy. Cassirer has the gift, especially rare in Germany, of lucid exposition, of marshaling enormous masses of information clearly and of unraveling intricate arguments without ever becoming either shallow or turgid. Cassirer has also attempted more systematic speculations of his own: especially a book on *Substance and Function,* which was one of the first treatises to discuss the philosophical implications of Einstein's Theory of Relativity, and his *chef d'oeuvre*, the three-volume *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (Berlin, 1923-29). Here human culture is interpreted as a series of systems of symbols: a whole volume is devoted each to language, myth, and the theory of knowledge: all are seen as instruments of men's desire for self-knowledge, as phases of the one all-embracing concept of human culture.

The English book is a very much abbreviated version of this Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: especially the third and most important volume on the Theory of Knowledge is scarcely represented in the English version. But the new book adds something to the German in new chapters on Art and Historiography (in the book misleadingly called History) as two further symbolic activities of man which Cassirer had not discussed in detail before. The whole is introduced by a new sketch of the history

*Ernst Cassirer, **An Essay on Man.** An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1944. ix 237 pp. $3.00

of the concept of man which, on a small scale, shows Cassirer's gift as an intellectual historian at his best, and by reflections which try to draw the line between animal and human intelligence contrasting man's symbolic capacity with the animals' at most rudimentary use of signs. Thus one could criticize the book as being a misnomer: it is not an *Essay on Man*, since it scarcely discusses man as an ethical and religious being or as a political animal. It is rather a sketch of a general theory of symbolism. Language, myth, religion, art, historiography are all conceived as so many symbolic activities of man which have one common function, man's self-knowledge, and hence man's progressive self-liberation. Cassirer is very careful to preserve the particular structure and role of each of these activities and to see their unity as merely a functional one. To my mind this formal unity has become so tenuous that little has been established beyond proving that there is this general human *motif*: man's attempt to grasp the world around him and within himself by symbols. But whatever one may think of the value of this overall theory, the individual chapters are strewn with illuminating observations, brilliant historical sketches and references which show an unfailing grasp of the most varied subject-matter and the newest theories about it. The chapter on myth which treats a subject rarely considered as repaying any philosophical attention and the chapter on language which shows an awareness of the newest structuralism as developed by the Prague school are particularly good. The chapter on art suffers, to my mind, from Cassirer's inordinately romantic literary prejudices. Neoclassical aesthetics is interpreted with no sympathy for its position or even insight into its vocabulary. Thus the term "imitation" is constantly considered merely an advice to copy nature or the ancients and not as representation, interpretation and discovery of essential reality (to use Cassirer's own terms) as it was understood by all but the most mechanical and narrow-minded neo-classicists. The historian of English criticism will also object to the way in which the position of Shaftesbury is magnified or Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* are made to read as a romantic manifesto, though they fit in completely with the neoclassical views on originality and the marvelous.

But these are details. More fundamental misgivings will be aroused in anybody who distrusts the excessive intellectualism and formalism of Neo-Kantianism which, after all, in spite of all Cassirer's reservations, is implied in the whole scheme. All these symbolic activities, to him, culminate in science, the "last step of man's mental development," "the highest and most characteristic attainment of human culture." Religion is seen almost completely in terms of its continuity with myth, and art appears as a form of knowledge, though of a "peculiar and specific kind." Cassirer distrusts naturalism in the sense that he sees the weaknesses of nineteenth century positivism as he can criticize them, for instance, in the simplications of Taine. But substantially he does not seem too distant from certain forms of pragmatism and instrumentalism: we hear little of his earlier emphasis that there is a primeval activity of the spirit in all these symbolic forms

and that his philosophy of symbolic forms thus vindicates the fundamental thesis of idealism (cf. *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*, Vol. I, p. 11). Something has happened: one can only guess that Cassirer, possibly under the influence of his new American environment, has given up the metaphysical implications of his position. I, for one, cannot help feeling that his earlier views were more coherent and more convincing.

FIVE TITLES IN RECENT FICTION

By Ray B. West Jr.

THESE five books have one thing in common: they are all very much worth reading.* **The Magic Year, The Power House,** and **The City of Trembling Leaves** are novels in the conventional sense of the term; **Stephen Hero** is a fragment of an early version of James Joyce's **Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man**; while Marguerite Young's **Angel in the Forest** fits into none of the known genres, being neither novel, poem, nor social essay (the publishers call it "a fairy tale"), though borrowing from all of these forms.

Miss Young, beginning with the historical facts surrounding the establishment of two 19th century social experiments in early Indiana, traces the failure of Father Rapp's religio-social community, which failed in the midst of success, as well as Robert Owen's materialistic socialism, which succeeded beyond the expectations of its immediate failure. It is less the story of Harmony and New Harmony, Indiana, than it is a recounting of the beginnings of the world labor movement, and the irony implicit in its approach to history is an effective element in the author's prose style, which had been described by most reviewers (with only a loose kind of accuracy) as poetic. It represents an attempt to reconcile through the sensibility of the artist the diverse and disparate elements of our 20th century civilization, depending more upon a kind of tone and attitude than upon generalized statement to resolve its ambiguities, and it is successful except in the growing monotony of too much cataloguing and in a too great dependence upon the facetious juxtaposition of commonplace and highly technical words and phrases, the effect of which is often a sense of insincerity or trickery.

Miss Young has been praised (and justly) for her originality, but she is an experimental writer only in a technical and limited sense. James Joyce, even in the conventionally-written early version of his **Portrait,** is more the experimentalist, because he is most concerned with analyzing and examining the state of 20th century Irish religious and national life, in creating the world upon which his later works were to be built. While Miss Young's method presupposes an awareness of and an acceptance of traditional values, if only for the purpose of social clarification and synthesis, Joyce's acceptance is extremely tentative in **Stephen Hero.** Stephen Daedalus is a forerunner of all contemporary literary rebels, the legitimate ancestor of Frederic Henry and Eugene Gant, and he has much more in common with them in **Stephen Hero** than in his later appearances in **The Portrait** and **Ulysses,** for here the "hero" is still more important than his circumstances. He is the lonely and isolated young man—the artist; the myth has not yet surrounded him, made him, as it were, a representa-

*__Angel in the Forest,__ by Marguerite Young, Reynal & Hitchcock, 1945; **Stephen Hero,** by James Joyce, New Directions, 1944; **The Magic Year,** by Joachim Maass, L. B. Fischer, 1944; **The Power House,** by Alex Comfort, Viking, 1945; **The City of Trembling Leaves,** by Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Random House, 1945.

tive human being.

This is the clue, I believe, to the aesthetic intention of the last three novels, books by a German refugee, an English pacifist, and an American regionalist (though the "tags" describe only their most obvious characteristics), an explanation of the clear tone of tolerance and acceptance which runs through them. There is almost no condemnation of the German character as such in **The Magic Year,** and the reviewer who saw in the sentimental portrait of the Andermann family the seeds of Naziism and the beginning of Hitler overlooked the fact that the narrator did not succumb to the fascist ideology but chose exile instead. "It is nothing to us, this 'awakening of the nation,'" he says. "It seems we have not awakened with it." "No," his friend replies, "the muck is rising to the surface." These statements are made after an early morning interrogation by Nazi officials and Storm Troopers, and they represent the mature disgust of the artist with brutality, just as the young Jakob Andermann has been disgused with the inexplicable defilement of his home by burglars, by the tyranny and injustice of his schoolmaster, and by the latent evil which he came to recognize about him in the city of Hamburg.

But one must not forget that this is more than a mere picture of the rise of Naziism, just as Mr. Comfort's novel is more than a depiction of events in France during the occupation. These authors are less interested in blanket condemnation of people and of races than are our generals and our politicians; they are more concerned with the psychological and ideological roots of evil. If irrational brutality is, for Mr. Maass, a mystical and inevitable force, somehow destined to recur periodically to disturb the cultural status quo (perhaps the least satisfactory aspect of the book), Mr. Comfort is less stoical, but no less hopeful. It would be interesting and, no doubt, instructive to examine in detail the complex symbolism which is used to substantiate and reinforce the theme of **The Power House,** which is less simple, I suspect, than most reviewers (limited perhaps by editorial requirements) have made it seem. The readers of this review will have to take my word for the fact that Mr. Comfort predicts the inevitable victory of a kind of Democracy very like Anarchy, the defeat of the "thugs" and the "humbugs" (fascists and their collaborators) by the hitherto impotent "little" people, but since the novel is not primarily a document, no such simplified statement can do justice to it. You will have to take my word for it, too, that Mr. Comfort is probably the most promising young novelist writing in English today.

Walter Van Tilburg Clark's **The City of Trembling Leaves,** the story of a young musician in Reno, Nevada, has little more in common with this author's earlier successful **The Ox-Bow Incident** than a preoccupation with the mountain environment. Stylistically, it represents a greater change than Wallace Stegner's from **Remembering Laughter** to **The Big Rock Candy Mountain,** though the process is similar in the respect that it is a shift (not necessarily a progression) from the short novel to the long novel form. Thematically, it represents a much more ambitious attempt to solve the problem of the relationship between man and his environment, and the relationship is, in this novel, complicated by the sensitivity of its artist-hero rather than by the diversity of character, as in the earlier book.

The emphasis in **The Ox-Bow Incident** was upon the social environment, the struggle of a pioneer society for the most elementary kind of social justice. **The City of Trembling Leaves** attempts something much more difficult: to express the emotional relationship of man to a particular natural scene. The principal character, Tim Hazard, is a musician, and his chief composition, upon which he is consciously and unconsciously working from the beginning of the book to its end, is his "Symphony of the Leaves," the expression of himself (man) to the place where he was born and raised (the city of trembling leaves). It is an inversion of the Wolfian theme, for Tim Hazard, in his creative

labors, is always looking homeward, is going home again. Indeed, except for a brief interlude in a California artist's colony, he never leaves his home environment and, apparently, never has the slightest desire to do so. This is a far cry from the novels of a generation back, which Carl Van Doren called "the revolt against the hometown," and it exemplifies the changing mood of acceptance which would appear to be replacing the rebelliousness of our fiction between the wars.

But there is a disturbing and irrational note in this wave of affirmation that has been remarked in the recent works of such various authors as Arthur Koestler, Aldous Huxley, and W. H. Auden, and Mr. Clark's main thesis does not succeed in dispelling it. He is no doubt correct in seeing the aesthetic sensibility as one means of reconciling the apparently irreconciliable elements of man and nature (Tim's symbol for himself is the aspen, whose leaves stir even when the force that causes them to quiver is imperceptible to the ordinary sensibility), but there is a kind of mysticism very much like the 19th century brand of pantheism in Tim's feeling of universal kinship "by bones and by atoms, the seasons of fruiting and of death, by the immortality of generation, by the universe of space and of the grains of dust," which seeks to explain simply by piling mystery upon mystery. It becomes finally, as Mr. Clark half-realizes, because he only half-admits, a kind of "childish tinkering with notions."

He is on safer ground when he seeks to examine the springs of his hero's creative impulse through the sublimated sex relationship between Tim and Rachel, and it is here too that he comes nearest to a clear statement of the value of the natural scene: "However, it wouldn't do to touch Rachel; not even with his mind must he ask anything of her. It was the suspension, without desire, without regret, with only the lucid, independent present, which was the gift of the mountains." Here Mr. Clark is attempting the creation of an attitude toward nature, toward the particular western scene, as an imposing but quieting presence, the very opposite of the attitude current since the 18th century, which saw the mountains as symbols of a cruel and ravishing, irrational force; and it might be argued in Mr. Clark's defense that the artist in the West must come to some such terms with his environment, just as the artist elsewhere must formulate (or accept or rebel against) social and historical attitudes. It is, perhaps, a mark of the present tendency among novelists, that Mr. Clark, unlike Vardis Fisher, for example, desires to justify and to affirm what he recognizes as a "power" which cannot be dismissed. It is the same tendency which caused other writers, of another time, to personify and to deify, and there are passages in **The City of Trembling Leaves** where Mr. Clark comes very near to doing just that.

On the whole, these five books, then, are serious attempts on the part of five more than usually important authors to discover some means of coming to terms with the society of their times. If, in the case of Joyce, this does not seem to be true, it must be remembered that **Stephen Hero** culminated in **The Portrait, Ulysses,** and **Finnegan's Wake,** and, since it remained unpublished during the author's lifetime, it should be considered primarily as a commentary on the Joycean method, rather than as a finished novel. As for the remaining four authors, none of whom was born before 1901, it can be said that they represent, perhaps, the vanguard of a generation which has not yet been "tagged": which may represent a "lost generation," but one which is struggling to find itself.

THREE NOVELS

By George Snell

So far 1945 has witnessed the publication of some unusually good first novels, three of which mark their authors as potential central figures in the fiction of the next few years. Stephen Seley's tour de force, **The Cradle Will Fall** (Harcourt, Brace, 1945) makes a vivid job of recreating the consciousness of a child during a period of extraordinary stress. In the course of the novel Junebug (the diminutive bestowed by an aunt) circulates among his towering relatives and interprets their actions and speech with preternatural acuity; but his real tragedy, the death of his mother, is moving and properly becomes the focal point for the novel's drama. **The Cradle Will Fall** is a very young book; Mr. Seley can and no doubt will improve.

More accomplished if less dramatic is Elizabeth Hardwick's **The Ghostly Lover** (Harcourt, Brace, 1945)—as refined and polished as Mr. Seley's is straightforward and unselfconscious. Miss Hardwick has hardly "stepped into the front rank of American Novelists' as the jacket contends, but she certainly may get there with luck and experience. Her story of Marian Coleman of Kentucky is another autobiographical treatment of a familiar theme, the search of a sensitive ego for its most rewarding identifications in family life and in love. **The Ghostly Lover** is somewhat Jamesian; it explores the psychological effects of the Family upon Marian, and it is written in a quite tenuous prose. There is something ghostly about it altogether: and yet Miss Hardwick can write and seems to have important material; she too will improve.

Of Ellen Marsh's **Drink to the Hunted** (Dutton, 1945), however, it can be said that a young talent has created a serious and 'mature' novel which need not ask indulgence on the score of its primogeniture. **Drink to the Hunted** is a full, headlong, stirring history of lifelike characters, interpreted with sympathy, and to a surprising degree. As the production of a 21-year-old it is little

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short of astonishing, because this novel exhibits so much of wisdom and compassion.

Like Laurie Bailey, her heroine, Miss Marsh seems to have learned to take the world and its people for what they are, not for what they ought to be and are not: and this is more usually an accomplishment of age than youth. Laurie was the offspring of a brief marriage between an American officer billeted in Germany during the first World War, and a lovely, passionate and erratic German girl. During the years of her babyhood and on into adolescence Laurie was shuttled back and forth across the Atlantic, divided in her loyalties and standing always on the unstable ground of her parents' disagreements. In the end she saw through the failure of her mother and determined to follow a way of life exemplified by her father; she matured in the crucible of her emotional conflicts.

The strength of the book lies primarily in its engrossing and wholly successful picture of a changing society in Germany during the interregnum between wars. The young people Laurie knows, the ferment of Nazism, the atmosphere of terror and approaching doom—these are touched off with masterly ease. Ellen Marsh's book is strong without being brutal, real without being pedestrian, and sensitive without being slight.

ACT OF IMAGINATION

By Brewster Ghiselin

Though Theodore Spencer's **An Act of Life** (Harvard University Press) contains some good work, mostly lyrical, it is on the whole prolix and platitudinous. In "The World in Your Hand," Spencer concludes that we must "remember/ The voice within that says: 'Wait. Be Still.'" "And when we have heard, Oh when we all have heard," love will appear among us and everything will be better. The following from "Heritage," another of three long poems, is representative:

We come alone out of the dust,

FOOD FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM

PRODUCE AND CONSERVE

SHARE AND PLAY SQUARE WITH FOOD

We go alone back to the dust;
But in between the black and black
We have the universe for track;
For seventy years the air is ours,
The wide sky and the crowded flowers,
And more than contemplation should
Justify our livelihood;
For after thought, action must come,
Each decision be pressed home,
That what we do today may be
Pledge of tomorrow's mastery,
That we may build, firm stone on stone,
A house still useful when we've gone.

This clot of cliche is curiously like that Georgian rimed wisdom with which we were long ago surfeited.

After Spencer, the novelty of Oscar Williams (**That's All That Matters,** Creative Age Press) is heady and may perhaps be overvalued. To Williams, established order is boring, burdensome, or evil. "Having gotten tired of the printed page [the ordinary experience] I turned the book upside down." He praises ". . . a fierce universe where/ One day washes out the seas and the continents/ With its faith in extravagance." In an earlier reading, published in the **Rocky Mountain Review,** it was "the past" that was washed out, "as soon as/ It writes itself on the mind." The cancellation is of the familiar and finished, the faith is in the creative energy which brings forth something new. In his poem "On Rising in the Morning" he celebrates escape from facts and phenomena:

An Atlas, unburdened of his weighty boulders,
We rise up in the field of things we meet,
The earth at long last fallen from our shoulders . . ."

In "The Reverse" he praises escape from the familiar patterns of experience: with "the book upside down . . ./ The w crossed its little hands on its stomach . . ./ The script was dazzling and unreadable." Here the escape is into fantasy and even into the meaningless—"unreadable." Any novelty is interesting to him, even the trivial or senseless.

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The search for novelty is the motive behind much of Williams' poetry, and it is the clue to his method. Ordinary language may be freshened by distortion:

"Like trees over water washing
faces in jigsaw reflections
The foliage of words washed
its face in patterns."

In a world seen upside down, clouds are "silver linings all babbling of bedrock." Here the cliche phrase naming a part stands for the whole, in a synechdoche in which cliche is freshened by an unexpected and individual use. Such virtuosity has value as evidence of the energy and richness of the spirit. But it creates no new order. We must discriminate between novelty however vigorous and the product of imagination.

The pursuit of novelty is carried further in poems by C. H. Ford which accompany reproductions of paintings by Tanguy and four other moderns (**Poems for Painters,** View Editions). Here too the familiar is disarranged, with somewhat the same effect of free energy, of exuberant assertion of the capacity to vary, as in Williams' verse:

Twigs, bones of the boy you were
Wait for the bird with the kindling fur.

Williams, for all his hate of stand and staleness, is far more content with the consciousness of his time than is Ford, who like most of the painters represented is continually moving into or straining to escape into tracts of consciousness little cultivated in our time or wholly neglected. As he says of Tanguy, Ford has "set new traps for ancient dreams."

Something like that might be said of Thomas Merton (**Thirty Poems,** New Directions), whose effort is largely devoted to trapping in refreshed language the doctrines and experiences of Christianity. His interest considerably limits his range.

But he knows more of where he is going than Williams, who seeks out, not a specific order required for the satisfaction of a specific life, but almost any novelty whatever, and Ford, who is oriented toward the enormous subliminal world. Like Williams and Ford, Merton is often experimental in his writing. He has been published in **View.** But very often he is commonplace, especially in many of the religious poems. Perhaps for an artist it is better not to have too dependable a roadmap.

The latest poetry of Kenneth Rexroth (**The Phoenix and the Tortoise,** New Directions) is more traditional in style. In attitude he is like Williams, however, in his reliance on the creative energy of the spirit, his rejection of all traditional solutions and of the mechanical flux of nature. Order is to be found in the creative act of the "responsible" person

> Sustained by all the universe,
> Focusing the universe in act—

Presumably the order subsists in the action maintaining the self in the universe:

> The immense stellar phenomenon
> Of dawn focuses in the egret
> And flows out, and focuses in me
> And flows infinitely away
> To touch the last galactic dust.

This is something like a fulfilment in being part of the cosmic tide, different in every instant. The experience is, however, to judge by the poetry, an individual exercise of familiar gestures, not a new way of life. Much of the poetry in this volume has enough tension to convey the substance of such experience. Some of it is a little prosy. Less successful, the "Translations and Imitations" read like translations.

Dennis Devlin's translation of the **Pluies** of Perse is more satisfying (**Rains (Pluies)** by St.-John Perse, the French Poem with an English Translation, The Sewanee Review). Like Eliot's **Anabasis** it has vitality and the taste of English. Perse is celebrating the disordering that makes way for new order. It is not a matter merely of words washing their faces, though that happens: "I raised sponge and gall to the wounds of an old tree laden with the chains

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BOOK REVIEWS

SAMUEL JOHNSON
by Joseph Wood Krutch
review by Austin Warren

NEW DIRECTIONS VIII and THE NEW ROAD
review by Sherman Conrad

WAR POEMS
by Oscar Williams
review by Brewster Ghiselin

A MASQUE OF REASON
by Robert Frost
review by Ray B. West Jr.

Others: **Mesa Verde** by Christopher La Farge, **The Wild Horse of the West** by Walker D. Wyman, **The League of Frightened Philistines** by James T. Farrell, **The Golden Years** by Vardis Fisher, **No Voice is Wholly Lost** by Harry Slochhower.

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of the earth." Nor is it only that the past that "writes itself on the mind" is washed out, though that is part of it: "Each stone washed of street-signs, each leaf washed of Latria-signs, is earth cleansed of the copyists' inks . . ." The poem is a celebration of the full conditions of imaginative action: deliverance from the limitations of order, not into novelty, some different order refreshing because it is new, but into that unqualified wholeness of the spirit from which it is possible to act freely. It is also an act of imagination.

ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE

THE shape of books to come, if Mr. Adams' convictions and hopes have their way, will doubtless asume that of a halo. The paramount functions of literature, by Mr. Adams' demand, (**The Shape of Books to Come,** by J. Donald Adams, New York. Viking. 1944) are "to enhance the joy of living by reinforcing in us the belief that life is full, adventurous, and rewarding—and to assist in restoring the dignity of the human spirit." These functions, he declares, have been disregarded or reviled by the novelists of naturalistic bias who are the objects of his criticism. Anderson, Caldwell, Hemingway, Farrell and Dos Passos have exhausted, in various ways, the chronicle of man's degradation. Wolfe and Faulkner, though verbally talented, have fed on their own entrails, un-nourished by the healthier diet of the objective world available to them. Dreiser, Faulkner and and Wolfe had depth; Dos Passos and Wolfe had breadth; none of them had elevation which alone completes the indispensable trinity of a major literature. Sinclair Lewis and John Steinbeck are not wholly to be rejected, since their work "**in spite of** (the italics are not Mr. Adams') its severely critical approach to American life must be reckoned as positive in spirit."

There is accuracy, but no surprises, in Mr. Adams' incidental strictures of contemporary realism. However, the nebulous truisms which serve him for thesis and conculsions establish what a country gentleman's view of literature he fundamentally possesses. For his virtual, and virtuous, dismissal of the novelists under

discussion imply that they invented, from mere wilfulness, a perverse cosmos, psychically unrelated to the world they lived in. He is unable to understand that these writers, though they may very well shine dimly in the firmament of great literature, have burned (and consumed themselves, admittedly) with the flame of passionate discovery. No American writer of the future can afford to ignore their unflinching interpretation of the malignant acquisitiveness, the moral confusion, and the terrifying contradictions of the sexual and economic life implicit in the American scene.

The absence of this dark insight would no doubt suit Mr. Adams. Despite his protests to the contrary, one is finally impressed by his unsubtle division of books into either affirmative or negative. He is completely baffled by Henry James, whose irony commanded the middle ground between denial and acceptance of a moral situation, and, while heralding a fuller life for modern fiction in the work of A. J. Cronin and Betty Smith, he fails to mention the existence of Katherine Anne Porter. Clearly, Mr. Adams' books to come must, in the words of a current and, I fear, popular lyric, accentuate the positive, and not ever mess with Mister In-Between.—VERNON A. YOUNG.

NAZI RULE

(Translated by Eric Russell Berkley, New Directions 1944)

BERTOLT Brecht's **The Private Life of the Master Race,** is subtitled by its dramatist-poet author, "A Documentary Play." Consisting of seventeen distinct dramatic episodes selected from the longer work, **Fears and Miseries of the Third Reich,**—episodes ranging in length from a single page to approximately twenty pages—the book is a "play" largely in form alone, and in the mind of the reader whose imagination is given the privilege of staging and directing it. According to the generally understood meaning of the word, it is not a "play" in that, among other things, there is no dramatic development and continuity. "Documentary" it is, in that the

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scenes are a skillful selection of not uncommon incidents under the Third Reich, many of which have received attention in the public press.

Each scene portrays the kernel of a dramatic situation created by the Nazi rule. The slimy picture of friends accusing friends and children informing against parents, of force applied to keep truth quiet, of judges deciding cases in accordance with the party line or the interests of particular members in power, of suspicion, violence and cynicism—all these appear as they have grown into the life of the country.

In contrast, the "other side" is portrayed, ranging from those who helplessly accept conditions or string along with them to avoid violence and those who halfway articulate their protests, to those who futilely opposed the Nazis. Accompanying each scene, a "Voice" which in a way may be regarded as a sort of conscience, bitterly speaks the truth in summary.

The book will interest all who have made an effort to understand the problems created by a dozen years of Nazi domination in Germany. From a literary point of view, its chief merit (quite apart from the possible influence it may have on future dramatic forms of writing) lies in the deft manner in which each scene crystallizes the emotional and intellectual content of a dramatic moment. By suggestion and phrasing the reader is stimulated to create both the development and the setting in which the characters move.

An interesting essay on Brecht and his work, by the translator, appears at the end of the volume and places this writer in perspective for those unfamiliar with his work, as well as evaluating him as a dramatist, poet and personality. Two sentences from this essay may be quoted in conclusion, as they well summarize the writer's reactions:

"The style is new, to many, puzzling at first to some, flat as a text for reading. But the cumulative effect can be dramatically every bit as strong as the unilinear development of a well-made play."—F. C. GOLFFING.

Comment

(Continued from Page 162)

Charles Neider, whose essay on Thomas Mann in this issue begins a new series of "examinations" of authors whose work has had considerable influence upon contemporary writing, is a former editor of **Decision,** a former member of the foreign news staff of **PM,** and a former member of th editorial staff of the **New Yorker.** He has published other work on Mann and expects to collect it all into a book-length manuscript one of these days. He is currently working for the Office of War Information and wrting a novel. The five sonnets by Paul Engle in this issue will be included in a volume to be published this Fall by Random House. Mr. Engle is the well-known Iowa author, director of the Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa. Other sonnets in this series have appeared in **Poetry: A Magazine of Verse** and **Kenyon Review.**

Sonia Raiziss is a young Philadelphia poet who has published widely, though this is her first appearance for several years. She has just completed a book-length study of "The Metaphysical Poets." Celeste Turner Wright is an Associate Professor of English at the University of California College of Agriculture at Davis.

Among the reviewers, Rene Wellek is a native of Prague, at present Professor of English at the University of Iowa. Vernon A. Young is from Santa Fe. Francis C. Golffing is a native of Vienna, now a member of the U. S. armed forces, stationed in Michigan.

Professor Wellek's review in this issue inaugurates a new policy in our book section of presenting one "feature" review each issue. These reviews will represent a special consideration of some book, which the editors decide deserves such attention, and they will, it is hoped, always be conudcted by someone as particularly qualified to consider the subject-matter as Mr. Wellek. The next such review will be a discussion of Joseph Wood Krutch's **Samuel Johnson** by Austin Warren.

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